



Chapter 7

ARIZONA'S PRIORITY OUTDOOR RECREATION ISSUES

Each State's SCORP must identify outdoor recreation issues of statewide importance based upon, but not limited to, input from the public participation program. The plan must identify issues the State will address through the LWCF, and those issues which may be addressed by other means.

In several brainstorming sessions, the SCORP Work Group identified dozens of issues currently affecting Arizona's outdoor recreation situation. Many of these issues were included in survey questions to determine how the majority of Arizonans and outdoor recreation providers felt about the issues. After further research and evaluation, these issues were consolidated and are summarized in nine priority areas (Table 98). They are listed in no particular order.

Table 98. Nine Priority Outdoor Recreation Issues For Arizona's 2008 SCORP

- **Secure Sustainable Funding**
- **Plan for Growth/ Secure Open Space**
- **Resolve Conflicts**
- **Improve Collaborative Planning and Partnerships**
- **Respond to the Needs of Special Populations and Changing Demographics**
- **Fill the Gaps Between Supply and Demand**
- **Secure Access to Public Lands and Across State Trust Lands**
- **Protect Arizona's Natural and Cultural Resources**
- **Communicate with and Educate the Public**

The following section describes each issue and lists out the goals and action strategies suggested to address each issue. In addition, many of the issues have been incorporated into the Open Project Selection Process (rating criteria) for LWCF and LRSP grants (see Chapter 8).

SECURE SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Issue: Existing levels of outdoor recreation funding are inadequate to meet the recreation needs of Arizona's residents and visitors. Moneys are tight or nonexistent at times for all aspects, including land acquisition, construction and renovation of facilities, operations and maintenance, planning and monitoring, and staffing programs. Some departments' park facilities require millions of dollars in renovation and stabilization costs just to keep facilities safe and standing. Clearly, budget stresses are presenting challenges to local, state and federal governments as they attempt to continue providing recreation for a growing and changing population. Insufficient resources to fund an agency's recreation budget and stability of the agency's budget are key issues, especially for small towns.

Increasing population, heavy use and inadequate maintenance are taking their toll on our outdoor recreation systems statewide. Moneys for ongoing maintenance as well as for new developments are crucial. Creative strategies that include a diverse array of sustainable funding sources, grants and public/private partnerships need to be developed.

Goal: The goal is to enhance the quality of Arizona's outdoor recreation opportunities by acquiring land and water resources, and constructing, operating and maintaining appropriate facilities (playgrounds, ballfields, campgrounds, trails, boating facilities and other water access sites, etc.). These lands and facilities are managed to support urban and resource based outdoor recreation, safeguard the environment and protect and interpret Arizona's outdoor recreation heritage while providing universal access for current and future generations.

Action Strategies:

1. Propose a variety of funding options to decision-makers accompanied by statistics on population, surveys, economic impacts, etc.
2. Develop funding programs to create sufficient funding and stable resources to manage and maintain outdoor recreation facilities. Make recommendations to the State Legislature for long-term funding programs, especially operation and maintenance costs.
3. Introduce state legislation to implement a new user fee such as a recreational equipment tax or gas tax, to increase budgets for all agencies involved in outdoor recreation, from the local to state levels. Consider special appropriations to address crucial renovations.
4. Encourage Congress to increase outdoor recreation funding for federal agencies in Arizona that provide outdoor recreational opportunities.
5. Encourage all local governments to develop park and recreation plans to qualify for participation in state and federal cost share programs.
6. Explore new and innovative funding methods for outdoor park and recreation facilities. These methods may include ideas such as public/private partnerships, cost sharing among multiple government agencies or a tax on outdoor recreational equipment.

7. Increase revenue generating capabilities for outdoor recreation by continuing to update and improve technologies such as automated fee collection systems, reservation systems, and multiple facility passes.

Continue to:

- Maintain and renovate outdoor recreation facilities for current and future generations.
- Provide for development and enhancements of urban outdoor recreation facilities such as soccer fields, playground equipment, dog parks, BMX bikes and skateboard parks.
- Provide for expansion of recreational trail systems and regional transportation networks that enhance opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and water trails, and for off-highway vehicle use such as four-wheel driving, dirt biking and all-terrain vehicles.
- Enhance and upgrade signage and maps for all outdoor recreation lands and waters.
- Acquire lands for outdoor recreation at all levels of government.
- Support publicly funded programs that provide financial assistance for the actions above.

PLAN FOR GROWTH/ SECURE OPEN SPACE

Issue: As Arizona's population increases, the demand for recreational opportunities and open space grows, but the land to provide those opportunities is decreasing. Arizona has extremely limited lands available for future development, (i.e., private land, State Trust land, and select federal land). State Trust land is a key variable for Arizona's growth.

Identifying important lands and their access points and acquiring them before development should be an integral part of growth planning, providing a foundation for parks and other outdoor recreation facilities, open space and natural areas, and is typically less expensive than acquiring them later. Not all land is equal—it is important to define beforehand the type of parkland or open space desired and the purpose(s) for which it will be used.

Without forward thinking growth plans and well-defined requirements for parks and open space, communities are often left with inadequate or unsuitable lands for parks, trails and open space; also access becomes an increasing problem. Without suitable parks, natural areas and open space, communities cannot meet their residents' quality of life expectations.

Many of these proactive efforts focus on creating what has been termed *green infrastructure*—parks, preserves, ecological corridors and trails that complement the more traditional built-infrastructure, such as roads, canals, sewers, and power lines.



Indian Bend Wash in Scottsdale provides flood retention and recreation opportunities.

Goal: The goal is “Smart Growth;” *growing smarter* is about creating and sustaining healthy landscapes, livable communities and vibrant economies. This type of proactive planning is to ensure Arizona’s desirability as a place that combines incredible resources with a dynamic economy, through integration of quality of life with quality growth in our everyday lives and expectations for future growth and development.

Action Strategies:

1. Support and cooperate with the ongoing efforts of the Governor’s Growth Cabinet.
2. Look holistically across geographic boundaries, disciplines, governments, private interests, generations and examine all benefits and costs, not just fiscal costs.
3. Identify and engage all stakeholders and those who might be interested in or affected by your decisions.
4. Do proactive and visionary planning, not just react to situations as they become critical.
5. Integrate transportation planning with recreational access needs (access to parks, preserves, open space, trails, public lands); plan for trail networks that double as nonmotorized transportation pathways within and between communities.
6. Determine the type, size and condition of the lands needed for parks and open space before enacting planning and zoning policies, ordinances or development set-asides.

Continue to:

- Support and fund the Growing Smarter planning processes locally and statewide to help stop the fragmentation of open spaces while also allowing for development.

RESOLVE CONFLICTS

Issue: As the sheer numbers of recreationists increase and the demand for different outdoor recreation activities grows, managing the resource impacts and conflicts that develop between these uses will become an increasingly important issue of public policy. Two conflict arenas merit continued creative management from those charged with prioritizing public resources.

The most obvious conflict arena is that which develops between different recreational users of Arizona’s finite land and water base. This conflict has developed as a result of both an increased demand for outdoor recreation activities and the development of new recreation technologies that have facilitated activities such as geocaching, skateboarding, BMX, jet skiing, and all terrain vehicle riding. Motorized versus nonmotorized uses, both on land in in water, have generated numerous conflict situations. Of main concern are issues such as safety, speed, inappropriate behavior, crowding, noise and dust levels. Too high levels of particulate matter (dust) are resulting in closure of “urban” OHV areas.

Motorized vehicle use for recreation has been increasing for the past few decades and shows no sign of slowing down. Land managers are behind the curve in planning for this rapidly growing activity and often treat it differently from other forms of trail recreation.

Some land management agency staff are reluctant to address this issue and do little to provide for or manage off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. This needs to change; OHVs are not going away. Active management will result in less resource impacts as well as less conflict.

The second conflict arena is that which develops between outdoor recreation and other forms of land use. This conflict has impacted the development and management of recreation lands, creating struggles between residential, agricultural, and managed public lands.

Arizonans have witnessed a rise in noise and air pollution, damage to natural and cultural resources, loss of wildlife and their habitats, trespass and vandalism on private lands, overcrowding of public lands and waters, and increased development pressures on parks, recreation lands and open spaces. Many private landowners and State Trust land lessees have closed access across their lands because of increasing vandalism and destruction of property. Other homeowners do not want recreational facilities near their homes for the same reasons.

The cause of these conflicts must be acknowledged and fair and equitable strategies for resolution identified and implemented. This cannot happen without involving all affected parties. Growing populations, competition for land, and diverse outdoor recreation activities put pressure on the state's natural resources, and especially on wildlife. We must understand these pressures and the capacities and limits of our natural resources. The term is "carrying capacity:" sociological (impact of people on people), biological (ability of ecosystems to withstand human use) and physical (spatial ability of an area to accommodate people).

Goal: The goal is implementing a well-planned balance of land uses including recreational opportunities that adhere to set carrying capacities and result in harmonious interactions between recreational users and between landowners and recreationists, and, protected and sustainable natural and cultural resources.

Action Strategies:

1. Proactively plan for new and upcoming recreational activities and have mechanisms in place to address increased user conflicts and provide for increased recreation uses consistent with the state's growth in population.
2. Proactively involve all affected parties when deciding on strategies to resolve conflicts.



OHV use is a legitimate form of recreation on our public lands, however, like other recreation uses, OHV routes must be well-designed, sustainable and fun for the user. The activity requires active management, and users must respect the rules and the environment.
[Photo Courtesy of Jeff Gursh]

3. Increase funding for outdoor recreation law enforcement authorities so that they may better enforce rules and regulations and protect our natural and cultural resources.
4. Examine and understand Arizona's capacity for local and state recreation growth, especially in accordance with the state's natural resource base. Planners must especially consider the impact development and outdoor recreation activities have on natural environments and wildlife populations, even in urban settings.
5. Prioritize recreational use of public lands to better meet the increasing demand for outdoor recreation.
6. Expand options such as private landowner incentive programs and recreational liability laws, which would allow public access across private and State and federal leased lands.
7. Provide user friendly information, access directions, maps, alternative sites, restrictions and regulatory information, and user responsibilities and stewardship actions to help reduce user and resource conflicts and impacts.
8. Provide for OHV use on public lands but manage it properly, to reduce conflicts with other recreation users and minimize the activity's impacts on natural and cultural resources, as is done for other recreational activities. Implement standards for constructing sustainable OHV routes, involve user groups in planning, building and maintaining satisfactory routes and facilities, and enact and enforce consistent OHV laws and regulations.

IMPROVE COLLABORATIVE PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Issue: Many issues related to recreation can be addressed by working collaboratively with other agencies and individuals and seeking public/private partnerships. Cooperative efforts are also beneficial when recreational activities within one jurisdiction impact the resources of adjacent lands, especially the urban/wildland interface.

The lands that people recreate on in Arizona are owned and/or managed by a multitude of agencies, organizations and private landowners, usually in the context of a checkerboard pattern. In many instances, the lands are not fenced or signed as jurisdictions change; however, the governing laws, regulations and policies may differ substantially from one parcel of land to the next.

The public is often unaware of nor concerned with which entity manages the land; they simply wish to enjoy their chosen recreational pursuits with minimal problems or disruptions (i.e., seamless management). They want consistent opportunities and regulations from one jurisdiction to the next. This requires interagency collaboration on uniform signage, policies and consistent enforcement of laws across jurisdictions.

When organizations actively network and pursue opportunities for collaborative planning and partnerships:

- cost sharing leverages additional funds, enabling resources and staff time to go farther,

- redundancy in facilities regionally is reduced,
- local trail systems are connected creating regional trail networks,
- access problems are reduced,
- conflicts between land uses and between recreational users are reduced,
- technical assistance and communication are better able to help protect natural and cultural resources at the landscape scale,
- resource management can be better addressed on an ecosystem basis,
- there is better potential to create and sustain wildlife corridors and migration routes, and
- invasive species and fire management programs will be more effective.

Goal: The goal is to expand systematic coordination, cooperation and information gathering among outdoor recreation planners and providers such as federal, tribal, state, regional and local government agencies, schools, non-profit and for profit cooperators, and willing private landowners. In conjunction, there should be an increase in communication and collaboration with the public concerning resource and outdoor recreation goals, needs and management.

Action Strategies:

1. Regional forums should be convened to develop collaborative strategies among communities with common interests, tourism business operators, nonprofit organizations, and the public lands managers responsible for delivering the outdoor experiences visitors desire. The regional forums should focus on cooperative approaches for:
 - Investments in parks, trails, open space and wildlife habitat stewardship planning, facilities development and operations/management strategies,
 - Transportation planning and funding for access to recreation sites,
 - Public information and marketing responsive to visitor preferences,
 - Education, volunteer and youth outreach programs,
 - Cultural sites stewardship and heritage tourism,
 - Connectivity among recreation sites, heritage and cultural sites, communities, and privately and publicly owned open lands, and/or
 - Specific management actions to deliver quality outdoor experiences and to conserve wildlife, its habitats and migration corridors.



Many organizations are collaborating to implement the Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Ambassador Program, partnering volunteers with county sheriffs and state and federal agencies to patrol OHV routes and areas and educate recreationists about responsible riding and land stewardship.

2. Public recreation agencies faced with tight budgets yet increasing demand for recreation services should expand volunteer programs to cover a broader range of recreation and resource management activities and consider appropriate fees for facilities and programs to enhance public services and interpretive/education programs.
3. Leverage recreation agency financial resources through a creative mix of partnerships with private businesses, non-profits and other agencies. Create a user-friendly database of grant sources, cost sharing opportunities, volunteer programs, and other partnership projects.

RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Issue: Our population is aging and, at the same time, our racial, ethnic and cultural diversity is growing. These demographic trends may require changes in how we provide outdoor recreation opportunities and facilities. More facilities need to be planned with “universal access” in mind so that people of all abilities can participate in these opportunities. Free or low cost recreation is in demand as living costs rise and more people discover recreation activities are a good way to address many health problems.

Parks have to remain and/or become more relevant to the changing demographics of America if they’re going to be used and funded, and if they hope to build a support base among future generations.

Teenagers and young adults benefit from outdoor recreation facilities and programs designed specifically to engage that age group in constructive recreational pursuits. Also, fewer children are playing in, or even experiencing, the natural environment as indoor pursuits (television, cell phones, video games, internet), structured activities and safety concerns (e.g., gang violence, ‘stranger danger’) increase. For many children, especially those living in urban areas, the outdoors may be more theory than a real part of their daily lives.

We need to create safe and unstructured opportunities for children to experience the natural world first-hand, near to where they live. Implementing creative outdoor programs and opportunities for nature appreciation and exploration must be offered to engage our children with the natural environment. There must be a deliberate approach to reconnect children with the outdoors.



*Kids need the opportunity to try many different outdoor recreation experiences.
[Courtesy of AOT]*

Goal: The goal is to provide appropriate opportunities and barrier-free access to enable the full range of Arizonans and visitors to learn about and enjoy the natural environment and outdoor recreation venues. This includes evaluation of existing facilities and areas; renovation of facilities to address deficiencies; construction of new facilities that meet

current universal access standards; recognition of the needs and expectations of ethnic populations; and creation of innovative opportunities for children to learn about and experience the outdoors.

Action Strategies:

1. Design recreation facilities with “universal access” in mind, wherever possible. There is a need for upgrades to provide more ADA-compliant outdoor recreation facilities
2. Know your present and future audience/customers and plan for and design parks and recreation areas to meet their specific and varied needs. For example, preteens and teenagers’ interests have changed dramatically in the past decade, find out what would attract and engage them in a park, recreational facility or program in your community.
3. Plan for single-parent households, designing facilities and programs not just for the children, but also involving the parent, and, address safety concerns.
4. More people are recreating in large groups instead of the traditional nuclear family. Design for this when planning facilities such as picnic ramadas and campgrounds.
5. Partner with nontraditional events and organizations such as schools, zoos, gardens, wildlife organizations, and land trusts, to attract and engage new audiences.
6. Implement innovative youth programs and opportunities for nature appreciation and exploration that gets children outside, off the streets, and beyond traditional playgrounds. Join the national movement to “*leave no child indoors*” and promote a “green hour” a day.

FILL THE GAPS BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Issue: Arizona’s growing population is placing an increasing demand on outdoor recreation resources at all levels, statewide. Rapid development and leapfrog communities are expanding towns and cities ahead of their ability to provide necessary infrastructure and desired amenities such as parks, trails and open space. Supply is not keeping up with demand, whether it be highly developed urban parks, specialized recreational facilities such as BMX courses or dog parks, or more dispersed recreation activities such as camping, hiking and boating. The demand is also increasing for parks, preserves and natural areas that are connected by regionally based trail networks.

Many people’s favorite recreational areas may be one to three hours away from home making frequent trips difficult, so they prefer to use “close to home” areas on a daily basis. Local communities and the state need to be visionary and proactive in planning and providing for future recreation demand, not as an afterthought. New parklands, trail corridors and open space within and near population centers need to be identified, funded, acquired, developed and maintained to meet this demand.

Goal: The goal is to expand and improve the range, quality and quantity of outdoor recreation opportunities in local communities and throughout Arizona that meet the needs of Arizona’s diverse residents and visitors. This requires anticipating where population growth will occur, how people’s expectations may change, and staying ahead of emerging trends and new technologies.

Action Strategies:

1. Communities should implement coordinated planning efforts between their planning and zoning, transportation and community service departments to anticipate the need for additional parks, trails, bike pathways, greenbelts and open space as communities grow.
2. Communities should consider enacting impact fees on new developments to pay for needed parks, trails and open space or require developers to provide and maintain these amenities as part of their development. Ongoing operation and maintenance costs are a major cost factor to consider.
3. Communities should provide for an equitable distribution of quality parks, desired recreational facilities and open space throughout their city, town or county.
4. State and federal agencies should implement coordinated interagency planning efforts for new recreational areas and trail systems to ensure an equitable regional distribution of desired recreational opportunities and access to natural environments.
5. Expand the use of partnerships or acquisition of fee simple ownership, perpetual easements or long-term leases for trails and other recreational access.
6. Community developments and expansions should provide for: connection of outdoor recreation sites (e.g. from park to park); safe, socially acceptable nonmotorized access to needed goods and services; and linkages to existing trails to form a cohesive network that includes more effective use of major transportation corridors for compatible non-motorized transportation. Make it easy to walk or bike to places!
7. Conduct research, surveys, and other means of predicting and meeting future changes in outdoor recreation demand, both locally and statewide.

SECURE ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS AND ACROSS STATE TRUST LANDS

Issue: There is a growing need to protect, maintain, and increase access to public lands and across State Trust lands to allow for the greatest diversity of outdoor recreational uses. As recreation continues to place demands on Arizona's lands and waters, the lack of public access to these areas has become an increasing concern among many citizens. In some cases this perception is true; more access is needed in certain areas of the state. In other cases, public access to recreational resources does exist, the public is simply not aware of it. Improved and easily accessible maps and signage would aid the public in locating access points and lands open to public recreation.

Public access to outdoor recreation sites and management of travel on public lands is challenged by the capacity of our statewide transportation infrastructure and of our natural resources and recreation sites to accommodate the volume of demand. There are few highways to transport the increasing numbers of people from the Phoenix metro area to the northern high country. In some cases there is only one available travel route and if there is a highway accident, travelers can be stuck in traffic for hours with no detour options.

As more recreationists enjoy Arizona's great outdoors, private landowners and state and federal land lessees who once welcomed hunters and hikers to cross their lands are now locking their gates because of increasing vandalism and damage to land and property.

Residential developments are pushing up against public lands, essentially blocking off existing access to these prime recreational lands. People are being charged with trespassing and/or are frustrated because they are unaware of legal access routes and recent closures.



With increasing trespass, vandalism, and recreational use, more landowners are closing their lands and access routes to public lands.

Goal: The goal is to secure sufficient public access to recreation areas, trails and public lands for the purpose of recreating in and enjoying Arizona's outstanding natural environments. This may entail purchasing access easements across private land and State Trust land, or providing other incentives to landowners to allow recreational access across their lands.

Action Strategies:

1. Identify lands and water bodies that should be maintained for public use and develop a process to prioritize acquisition of these lands and necessary access.
2. Limit acquisition of public lands to the minimal amount required to ensure and preserve public access to public lands and recreational resources.
3. Require developers to provide for and maintain existing and future access and easements to public lands from their developments.
4. Work with transportation departments to secure safe pedestrian and equestrian access across streets, highways and canals to enhance the usability of regional trail systems.
5. Include outdoor recreation and tourism issues in ADOT planning processes to facilitate efficient access to land and water recreation sites from transportation networks.
6. Provide for continued access to, and maintenance of, rural and backcountry trails and use areas for hiking, biking, skiing, equine, and motorized (OHV, snowmobile) recreation.
7. Public access programs should be paired with education efforts regarding private property rights, land stewardship, environmental ethics and responsible use.
8. Compile/encourage public lands management plans that are responsive to competing recreation demands while sustaining wildlife habitats and protecting cultural resources.
9. Approach Arizona's Congressional delegation with the proposal they sponsor legislation transferring some key federal lands to the State for recreational and access purposes.

PROTECT ARIZONA'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Issue: Arizona's natural and cultural resources are at risk from increasing human activities, including recreational activities, as well as natural events exacerbated by human influences such as wildfires, flooding, erosion, invasive species, and pollution. Protection of these resources needs to be put in balance with existing and future uses. Identifying important areas to protect and restore is essential to maintaining a healthy outdoor recreation system.

Water resources, such as wetlands, lakes and streams, must be protected to maintain the needed quantity, quality, and accessibility for public recreation, wildlife and other uses.

Many organizations are promoting ecosystem-based approaches to land protection efforts. Protection and preservation of archaeological sites, prehistoric and historic places, and traditional use sites is important to Arizona's knowledge base and sense of place.



Sunset along the Salt River northeast of Phoenix. Healthy, flowing rivers are critical for people, for recreation and for fish and wildlife.

The sustainability of natural and cultural landscapes and our capability to be stewards of those resources must be considered when agencies and communities plan for and manage the location and scope of outdoor recreation activities.

Goal: The goal is to protect, restore and, where appropriate, enhance natural and cultural resource quality related to public outdoor recreation venues. This includes providing information, opportunities and programs for people to learn and care about the natural world.

Action Strategies:

1. Build a statewide inventory of natural and cultural resources, and recreation areas; assess site conservation priorities including inventory of existing conserved sites, followed by identification of future site protection priorities.
2. Make the most effective use of limited public and private capital investment resources by developing collaborative strategies among public agencies, business community, farm and ranch owners, and non-profit organizations.
3. Develop or renovate recreation sites using best practices resulting in cleaner surface waters through reductions in erosion and other sources of water pollution.

4. The State's air quality is of increasing concern, especially near urban centers designated as nonattainment areas with respect to federal standards. When developing air quality plans, consider a diverse range of regulations and programs to reduce air pollution and particulate matter (airborne dust), especially that attributed to recreational activities. Do not just close large tracts of land to outdoor recreation, instead implement a variety of elements including designated travel routes, high pollution day restrictions, and educational programs.
5. When siting or planning new recreation facilities, be proactive in incorporating natural wildlife habitats into recreation settings, maintaining or restoring native vegetation and water courses. Sustain the natural values through effective site designs for facilities, infrastructure and appropriate recreation uses.
6. Find ways to interpret the natural and cultural features within and adjacent to recreation areas, enhancing people's awareness and understanding of their significance.

COMMUNICATE WITH AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC

Issue: One of the biggest complaints of the recreating public is lack of easily accessible information or awareness about recreation areas, access points and opportunities, especially up-to-date maps and guides. One of the biggest challenges for land managers is to find creative ways to inform the public about Arizona's unique environments, related management issues, how to safely and responsibly enjoy our public lands, and to productively involve them in management decisions and actions.

Arizona's citizens and visitors need more effective ways to access the wide array of information about recreation sites and programs and their host communities. Outdoor recreation providers need to better integrate outdoor recreation marketing and management needs to sustain the outstanding recreation attractions, economic vitality, and resulting quality of life. The public should also be aware of the costs and benefits of providing parks, recreation areas and open space. Volunteer opportunities should be explored and encouraged.

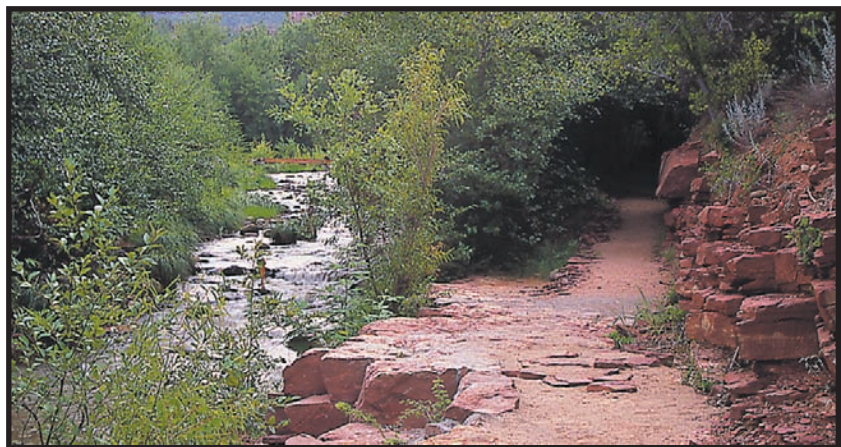
Land managers need to create new opportunities to present environmental ethic messages such as land stewardship, responsible use, Leave No Trace, Tread Lightly!. We need to encourage, fund, and provide environmental, cultural, and heritage interpretation and educational programs. If research is being conducted within a park, the study and the findings should be made available to the public in an interesting and integrated way, at various stages of the project, and through a variety of media.

Another communication issue concerns productive interactions between managing agencies and the recreating public. The public needs to have viable opportunities for input prior to any final land use decisions, especially when the decision will negatively impact recreation users and private landowners.

Goal: The goal is to provide effective communication efforts that satisfy the public's need for recreation information and participation in land use decisions, and the agencies' need for the public to receive and understand educational messages about responsible use, land stewardship, environmental ethics, resource protection, management decisions, etc.

Action Strategies:

1. Establish efficient and user friendly means for citizens and visitors to access sources of information about recreation sites and activities, and natural and cultural resources.
2. Establish a central website as a clearinghouse for Arizona outdoor recreation information. Include information from parks and recreation departments and land managing agencies regarding outdoor-oriented volunteer opportunities, special events such as clean-up days, and other ways interested individuals and organizations can get involved in learning about and protecting natural and cultural resources, and enjoying and improving outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. Partner with the outdoor recreation industry to enhance and expand public relations, marketing and educational outreach efforts.
4. Partner with local clubs and organizations, and/or establish volunteer programs to help educate park visitors and the public about the area's natural and cultural resources and to promote environmental stewardship messages. An excellent source of volunteers can be found as Baby Boomers begin to retire and seek out rewarding volunteer opportunities.
5. Promote environmental ethics, responsible use and land stewardship—through approaches such as Share the Trail, Nature Rules, Pack It In, Pack It Out, Leave No Trace, and Tread Lightly!
6. Market the availability of diverse funding sources such as the LWCF program, Heritage grants, private sector grants and other resources available to local organizations for parks and outdoor recreation facilities and programs, as well as for open space acquisitions and (backyard/school) wildlife habitat improvements.
7. Incorporate, even institutionalize, public involvement in all stages of land use and recreation planning and development. Use both formal and informal methods of getting the public to participate in brainstorming sessions, surveys, questionnaires and focus groups, as well as the more traditional comment and review of draft plans and proposals.



Red Rock State Park along Oak Creek near Sedona is also an Environmental Education Center teaching people about the wonders of nature and the benefits of practicing good land stewardship.



Chapter 8

OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

Land and Water Conservation Fund and Local, Regional and State Parks Heritage Fund

Process

The information presented in this section details the open project selection process used to make funding decisions for the state Local, Regional and State Parks (LRSP) Heritage Fund and federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant programs administered by Arizona State Parks (ASP). Information includes program information, a program time schedule, guidelines used for the LRSP/LWCF program and the rating points given for each. The guidelines for the LRSP/LWCF programs are based on the results of the SCORP planning process and task force meetings to gather public input. The LRSP/LWCF grant programs run concurrently and follow the same application, rating and award process.

Project Solicitation

In Arizona, the LRSP/LWCF grant programs are set up on an annual cycle; the schedule for the application and selection process remains the same from year to year. Eligible applicants under the LRSP/LWCF grant programs include the state, all of its political subdivisions and tribal governments. In accordance with a 1994 Memorandum of Agreement between the Arizona Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Commission (AORCC) and the Arizona State Parks Board (ASPB), a portion of the LWCF allocation is made available for competitive grants and a portion is used for outdoor recreation projects within the Arizona State Parks system.

Grant workshop announcements are made as early as August and workshop announcements are mailed to eligible applicants in September. The grant workshops, held in November, provide the applicants an opportunity to review the program and to see if there have been any modifications during the past year. The workshops are designed to ensure that applicants understand the guidelines and rating criteria used in the LRSP/LWCF programs, and assist them in developing quality projects and applications.

Project Selection

After LRSP/LWCF grant applications are received, each application undergoes a two step evaluation process. First, each application is screened to make sure it meets the minimum guidelines and legal requirements set forth by the National Park Service (NPS) and the ASPB. Staff then visits the site of each proposed project to become familiar with the projects. Those applications that meet all of the minimum requirements are then presented to AORCC for review. Secondly, each application is rated by a team of at least three people, using the rating criteria.

This rating criteria was developed from various components of the SCORP planning process and a task force comprised of recreation professionals from around the state. The results of the rating criteria are presented to AORCC along with staff funding recommendations in August. Applicants receive the same information and are encouraged to attend the AORCC meeting. After all public input has been heard, AORCC either adopts staff's recommendations or develops its own funding recommendations. Staff and AORCC recommendations are presented to the ASPB in September for final action. The public also has an opportunity to provide input at the ASPB meeting in September.

Arizona Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Commission

AORCC is an advisory body to the ASPB with many responsibilities, including oversight of the LRSP/LWCF grant process. Made up of representatives appointed by the Governor, AORCC guides staff in developing guidelines and rating criteria to ensure objectivity. AORCC is responsible for making funding recommendations to the ASPB.

Arizona State Parks Board

Once AORCC has made its funding recommendation to the ASPB, the Board takes final action on the recommendations and directs the ASP Director or designee to sign grant award participant agreements. The ASPB, whose seven members are appointed by the Governor, oversees the administration of these grants, which is accomplished by the Grants staff.

Program Assistance

Program assistance is a priority for all grant programs at ASP. There are three ways applicants and the public can receive this assistance. First, applicants and the general public are encouraged to call the Grants Section with questions or concerns about the LRSP/LWCF programs. Second, in order to provide project development assistance to all applicants, the Grants Section holds three grant application workshops across the state each year before the beginning of each grant cycle. Third, the Grants Section offers a review of applications prior to the submission deadline to provide applicants with information and assistance to create a better application.

Public Participation

Public participation is the basis of the Arizona SCORP and the LRSP/LWCF grant programs in Arizona. Public participation is integral to the LRSP/LWCF grant programs for guidelines and rating criteria development process and in project solicitation and selection. This participation is achieved through numerous public meetings held during the SCORP and grant planning process, and opportunities for public comments at AORCC and ASPB meetings.

Program Review and Updating

Task Force

Further, in an effort to obtain pertinent input from the applicants AORCC occasionally establishes a task force comprised of recreation professionals representing various geographical locales and jurisdictional affiliations. This group meets to discuss and evaluate the current rating criteria and guidelines that are being used. Ultimately the group may recommend, for AORCC and ASPB consideration, changes to the process for future use. As a result, the rating criteria and weightings change periodically to reflect the needs and demands of recreation providers and the public. Current guidelines and the rating criteria can be found in the LRSP/ LWCF grant application manual, which is revised and printed each year.

Affirmative Action

Both the SCORP process and the LRSP/LWCF programs are sensitive to the needs of all special populations. Participants representing low-income communities, the physically challenged, minority groups, women and other special populations participated at all levels in the SCORP planning process. Beginning in the issue development phase of SCORP; continuing through the guideline and rating system criteria process of the LRSP/LWCF program; and finally into the approval and award phase of the grant process, representatives from all these populations have had input into the development of this open project selection process. The staff at ASP are committed to meeting the needs of all Arizona's population, and ensuring that representatives from all special populations are invited and continue to participate during all phases of the SCORP process and in the LRSP/LWCF grant program.

LRSP/LWCF Grant Program Details

The following is a brief summary of the annual LRSP/LWCF grant programs. This information is available to the general public as well as any group or organization upon request from ASP.

Authorization and Purpose

The **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578) became effective January 1, 1965 and has since been authorized to continue through 2015. The Act provides financial assistance to states, their political subdivisions and Indian tribal governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

The **Local, Regional and State Parks (LRSP)** component of the Arizona State Parks Board Heritage Fund (A.R.S. § 41-503) was established in 1990 to provide funds for outdoor recreation and open space throughout Arizona. Eligible applicants for LRSP funds are cities, towns, counties and Indian tribal governments.

Qualification for State Participation in the LWCF grant program

To qualify for financial assistance under the LWCF program, each state must (1) designate an official to act for the state as liaison officer in dealing with the National Park Service; (2) designate an official to serve as the state's fiscal officer to receive and disburse federal funds; and (3) prepare and maintain a comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan. In Arizona, the State Liaison Officer is the ASP Executive Director. For LWCF program assistance a local governmental entity must have a responsibility to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to

the public and (1) independent governing authority; (2) independent signature authority; (3) independent authority to commit funds.

Qualification for Participation in the LRSP grant program

To qualify for financial assistance under the LRSP program, each governmental entity must have a responsibility to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the public and (1) independent governing authority; (2) independent signature authority; (3) independent authority to commit funds.

State Authorization

Under provisions of A.R.S. § 41-511.26, state agencies and incorporated municipalities are granted authority to participate in the LRSP/LWCF grant programs. The State Parks Board is responsible for administering the program in Arizona and preparing and maintaining the required outdoor recreation plan.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants under these programs include incorporated municipalities, counties, state agencies, and Indian tribal governments. ASP is not eligible for LRSP competitive grants. In accordance with a 1994 Memorandum of Agreement between AORCC and the ASPB, a portion of the LWCF allocation will be made available for competitive grants and a portion will be used for outdoor recreation projects at Arizona State Parks.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities for both programs are outdoor recreation and open space. Projects include, but are not limited to: *park development* (e.g., playground equipment, lighting, picnic facilities, ballfields, ramadas, sports facilities, restrooms and other facilities deemed appropriate or eligible by federal and state guidelines) and *land acquisition* to serve future outdoor recreation and/or open space.

Matching Requirement

Both LRSP and LWCF grants are awarded on a 50/50 match where the participant provides at least 50% of the project cost and the grant provides the other 50%.

Surcharge

Each successful LWCF grant recipient is required to pay a “non-project” surcharge to ASP. Revenue from surcharge payments is used to administer awarded grants and to assist in the development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The surcharge is currently set at 10% of the grant award and is non-reimbursable.

Application Evaluation and Approval

Complete LRSP/LWCF applications are evaluated by State Parks staff, reviewed by AORCC, and subsequently approved by the State Parks Board. The National Park Service approves LWCF applications.

Distribution of Funds

AORCC makes funding recommendations to the State Parks Board for final action and distribution of funding through participant agreements.

Application Deadline

Complete LRSP/LWCF applications must be received by Arizona State Parks no later than 5:00 P.M. on the last working day in February.

State Contact

Contact Arizona State Parks, Grants Section, at (602) 542-7129 for further information.

Table 99. Open Project Selection Process Recurring Funding Cycle

LAST WORKING DAY IN FEBRUARY– Applications must be received by State Parks by 5:00 p.m.

MARCH/MAY – On-site inspections of proposed LRSP/LWCF projects by State Parks staff.

JUNE – Project requests presented to AORCC.

JULY/AUGUST – LRSP/LWCF applications rated by review team.

AUGUST – Staff funding recommendations submitted to AORCC for consideration.

SEPTEMBER – Recommendations submitted to the Arizona State Parks Board for final action.

FOLLOWING BOARD ACTION - Participant agreements executed for approved projects and notice to proceed given.

When Land and Water Conservation Funds become available, the project applications will be submitted to NPS following ASPB approval.

The Arizona State Parks Board adopted a new vision for the agency in 2004 emphasizing that part of the agency's mission to not only manage the state's *recreational* resources but also its *natural and cultural resources*. The ASPB directed staff to implement this vision throughout its parks and programs, including the numerous grant programs administered by the agency.

Vision: *Arizona State Parks will be recognized locally and nationally as the outstanding resource management organization.*

The following grant rating criteria for the LRSP and LWCF programs reflect this new vision. The rating criteria are based on the priority issues identified through the SCORP process and were developed by the SCORP Work Group and Arizona State Parks Grants staff.

Table 100. FY 2008 LRSP/LWCF Rating Criteria

Grant Rating Criteria Summary	Points
1. Long-Range Planning	20
2. Project Need (Project Specific Planning/Public Involvement)	35
3. Conservation of Resources	20
a) Implementation of conservation actions, or	
b) Protection of existing resources	
4. Leveraging Funds through Donations	5
5. Project Sustainability	10
6. Past Grant Administrative Compliance	10
- Administrative Performance	4
- Post-Completion Compliance	4
- Workshop Attendance	2
TOTAL POINTS	100

What has Changed?

The new rating criterion focuses more on the demonstration of conscious planning and decision-making processes designed to meet the needs of local or regional recreation users.

Although the overall “big picture” remains important, more emphasis will be placed on the specific project and how it came to the forefront (project need). The priority issues identified in the SCORP are reflected in the new criteria and applicants will be asked to address such issues as supply and demand, user conflicts, and special population needs.

The old criteria also emphasized resource conservation. However, it was somewhat limited to energy conservation and low-maintenance features. The new criteria and point values focus on: 1) project specific issues, 2) how resource conservation and protection will be addressed, as well as, 3) how the projects will be maintained (project sustainability).

FY 2008 LRSP HERITAGE FUND AND LWCF RATING CRITERIA

Long Range Planning

up to 20 points

Comprehensive long-range planning that includes recreation and/or open space elements are now a state requirement for all municipalities. If your community does not have its own long-range plan, use your county's plan. This criterion refers to your community's long-range or general plan.

The explanation and supporting documentation provided by the applicant for this criterion must demonstrate that there has been conscious planning and decision making processes designed to meet the needs of local or regional recreation users.

- Identify your long-range plan, when it was adopted and when you plan to update it. Explain and document how your community's long-range plan addresses **recreation and open space**. This explanation may include how the plan provides a framework and direction for recreation and open space in your community
- How do you plan to address the following issues in relation to recreation and open space?
 - * Sustainable funding – What dedicated revenue sources for recreation and open space does your community have? (sales tax, general fund, revenue sharing, bonds)
 - * Planning for growth – How have you planned for future growth in your community? (general plans, changing zoning, ordinances, legislation, education, projected population/land use planning, annexation)
 - * Securing open space – How have you planned to secure open space for current and future needs? Are you planning to secure additional open space? If not, explain why. If you have open space lands, how do you plan to protect them for future generations? (working with developers, zoning, legislation, new policies/statutes)
 - * Partnering/Collaborative Planning – Are you partnering with other agencies, corporations, individuals by sharing staff, equipment, training opportunities and other resources. Are you collaboratively planning with other entities at a regional level?

Points for this criterion will be based on your explanation **and** documentation for each issue. Responses should be brief and to the point. Documentation points will be awarded only if the supporting documents are clearly explained in the narrative.

Project Need (Project Specific Planning/Public Involvement)

up to 35 points

The proposed project should be designed to meet the priority needs expressed by local or regional recreation users. This criterion refers to project specific planning.

- Explain and document what circumstances brought this project (the one this application is for) to the forefront and why this project is a priority.
- Explain and document your public outreach efforts, what you did to solicit public involvement (for example, held public hearings or meetings, conducted surveys, put notices in radio or newspapers).
- Explain and document how the public was involved in determining the need or how they responded to your public outreach efforts for the project you are applying for. Document how the public demonstrated support and affirmation for the project.
- Explain and document how this project addresses any of the following:
 - * Filling the gaps between supply and demand (need for more parks or open space, recreation amenities, close to home opportunities, connectivity, trail networks).
 - * Resolving user conflicts (between recreational users, landowners and users, competing land uses).
 - * Meeting the needs of special populations and changing demographics (for example: access to all, baby boomers, teens, elderly, ethnic differences).

Conservation of Resources**up to 20 points**

Arizona State Parks' vision, "*To be recognized nationally and locally as the outstanding resource management organization*" emphasizes becoming an outstanding management agency of the state's natural and cultural resources. This vision extends to the numerous grant programs the agency administers. Arizona State Parks is encouraging applicants who conserve resources by incorporating innovative and effective technologies and green building practices into their grant projects, and/or acquiring and protecting natural and cultural resources and open space.

Applicants may respond to either A or B based on project features. Up to 20 points will be counted toward this criterion. Points will be based on the explanation and documentation of the efforts, anticipated outcomes and/or extent of the measures in conserving or protecting resources.

- A. CONSERVATION:** Explain how this project will incorporate design elements, sustainable products or habitat enhancement in the most effective manner to conserve water or energy, or enhance natural resources.

Resource Conservation examples could include use of "green" practices (products or technology), smaller footprint (less concrete or asphalt), energy efficiency or conservation use of timers or sensors, solar energy applications, water conservation or reclamation, use of gray water, harvesting rainwater, use of recyclable materials, revegetation of native plant communities, restoration of wildlife habitat, etc.

Or

- B. PROTECTION:** Explain how this project will accomplish at least one of the following:

- Explain how this project will protect existing natural resources within the project boundaries; include size of area to be protected and uses to be allowed.

Examples of existing natural resources include riparian areas, washes, wetlands, other native plant communities, or wildlife habitats.

- Explain how this project will protect existing cultural resources within the project boundaries; include extent and significance of the cultural resources and uses to be allowed.

Examples of cultural resources include archaeological sites, historic sites, or traditional use sites.

- Explain if this project acquires, protects or designates open space or provides protective buffers around existing natural areas; include type and size of area to be protected and uses to be allowed.

Note: Open space is defined as land that is generally free of uses that would jeopardize the conservation values of the land or development that would obstruct the scenic beauty of the land. Conserved land remains open space if the stewards of the parcel maintain protection of both the natural and cultural assets for the long-term benefit of the land and the public and the unique resources the area contains, such as scenic beauty, protected plants, wildlife, archaeology, passive recreation values and the absence of extensive development.

Leveraging Funds through Donations

up to 5 points

To be eligible for Local, Regional and State Parks (LRSP) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants, all applicants must provide a minimum of 50% of the project cost. LRSP and LWCF grant funds may provide a maximum of 50% of the project cost. In other words, the applicant's funds and the grant funds are said to "match" each other.

Outside donations of cash, materials, equipment or donated labor leverage existing funds which enable both the applicant's money and these grant dollars to stretch further and accomplish more.

Points will be awarded on a sliding scale if at least 10% of your agency's match comes from outside donations.

- How much (\$) of your match will come from outside donors?
- Explain and document where the donations are coming from. Describe the tangible and intangible contributions you have received for the scope of work of this project and the associated value of the contribution(s).

All donations must be verified by a letter from the donor that indicates the value of the donation.

Types of donated match:

Tangible: donations of cash, materials or equipment

Intangible: donations of labor

Unskilled labor - \$6.75/hour (current minimum rate)

Skilled labor – based on the hourly rate in your community

NOTE: In-kind work done by the applicant is not a donation; but it can be considered as part of the applicant's match.

Funds from other Arizona State Parks' administered grant programs are not allowed as donations or match.

Project Sustainability**up to 10 points**

The ability of the applicant to operate, maintain or manage the facilities constructed or land acquired with grant funds throughout the required term of use is an essential factor of the LRSP and LWCF grant programs.

These grant programs mandate that any facilities or land, including natural areas or open space, purchased with grant funds be available for public use as set forth in this application for a prescribed period of time.

•Explain and document how your agency intends to operate, maintain or manage this project for the required term of use.

Term of use for Local, Regional and State Parks (LRSP) projects is:

- 25 years for facilities (real property)
- 99 years for land acquired with LRSP funds

Term of use for Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) is:

- In perpetuity

Past Grant Administrative Compliance

up to 10 points

This category will be completed by staff based on the applicant's past performance with the LRSP and LWCF grant programs.

Administrative Performance

This category is for applicants who have had an open LRSP or LWCF grant within the last 3 years.

- Up to 2 points will be awarded for timely submission of quarterly reports.
- Up to 2 points will be awarded based on project completion on or before the original project end date (i.e., received no time extensions).

If the applicant has not had either an open LRSP or LWCF grant within the past 3 years, all 4 points will be awarded.

Post-Completion Compliance

This category is for applicants who have a closed LRSP or LWCF project in which the Term of Public Use is still active.

For facilities (real property), the Term of Public Use for LRSP projects is 25 years; for land acquired with grant funds, 99 years.

For LWCF projects, the term of use is in perpetuity.

Points will be awarded on a scale of 0-4 according to the participant's compliance with the post-completion self-certification process.

If the applicant does not yet have any projects that require compliance with the post-completion self-certification process, all 4 points will be awarded.

Workshop Attendance

All applicants are encouraged to attend the annual grant workshop. Applicants represented at an LRSP/LWCF workshop for this grant cycle will receive 2 points.